

30 COMMENTARY ON MACAULAY'S
HISTORY

to paper and proceeds to print the result, he is attempting to convey his ideas to some other man. He presupposes the existence of a reader. It is therefore essential that he should arrange his ideas clearly, that he should state them so that they may be understood, and express them so that they may leave a lasting impression on the mind of the person to whom they are addressed. If he fails to achieve this, he has done only half of his work. Thus the historian's task is two-fold : he has first of all to find out the truth, which is a scientific process, and then to state the truth for the information of other people, which is a literary or artistic process. History is therefore in part a branch of science and in part a branch of literature. Professor Bury evades this conclusion by drawing a distinction ; he narrows the meaning of the word ' historian ' and restricts it to the man who performs the function of finding out the truth, using the term ' historiographer ' to define the man who states the facts agreeably, and calling the function of statement ' historiography '.

Now, Macaulay goes to the opposite extreme : he forgets the scientific element in history and thinks only of the literary element. The defects of his History are mainly due to this one-sidedness, this underestimate of the importance of one part of the historian's task. Not that he

neglected it altogether, but simply that he did not adequately realise its magnitude and its difficulty. His mind was too full of the other half of his task, the business of stating to the best advantage the facts he had collected by his investigations. The problem which occupied him most was how to reach the largest possible circle of readers.

He achieved this object : he reached at once a larger circle of readers than Hume or Robertson or Gibbon or any other English historian has done.